

Lori Stewart



Year Commissioned

1989 London Conference at Metropolitan United in London, Ontario

Program of Formation

CCS: (Diploma in Professional Development and Action)

What called you to Diaconal Ministry?

God. This is how it happened: I first asked my minister about ways to serve in the church that didn't involve preaching/worship leadership. I was interested in group leadership, Bible Study, planning educational events, etc. He told me about Diaconal Ministry and it seemed a good fit from what he described. After a move, I attended a church that called Alison Woods, a diaconal minister and graduate of CCS. I talked to both her and to Francis Clarke, another CCS graduate. After all of this process of discernment, I definitely felt called into this ministry.

Describe some of your experiences of ministry

I've served in a Pastoral Charge at Central United Church in St. Thomas, ON where I was in team ministry with an ordained minister. My ministry there involved worship leadership, pastoral care, some community outreach and coordination of the religious education programmes for all ages. I initiated training for pastoral care-givers from the congregation, led Confirmation classes, supported the visioning process, and involved people of all ages in worship planning and leadership.

Next, I served as the Stewardship Minister for London Conference where I developed and led training workshops, did consultation with congregational boards, supported the stewardship network across the Conference, staffed the committee that administered mission support grants, etc.

Now I live in Jamaica as an Overseas Personnel with my partner and children where we serve the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. Right now I am the Programme Director for Theology for the Institute for Theological and Leadership Development. ITLD has regional learning centres and I work in the central region. I coordinate the Lay Pastors and Leaders Training Programme, lead Eldership Training, teach and supervise theology students, and I am working to put together a regional offering of a BA in Theology. My work takes me all over the central part of Jamaica with occasional trips to Kingston and the North Coast.

How I explain Diaconal Ministry to others ...

God has one ministry to which we all contribute. Diaconal Ministry is a particular approach that focuses on social justice (in big and small ways), pastoral care, and education. Education for change is an aspect of all diaconal ministries.

What gives you the most satisfaction, reward, sense of fulfilment from the ministry you do?

I love the educational process, especially when there is a mutual teacher-learner experience going on. It's especially exciting when someone suddenly experiences a new idea in a life changing way. I enjoy watching students progress as they grow in faith and knowledge over time

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